TL5637 given Asylum in Portugal 26.IX.'95

tapol

The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign

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Honorary President: Lord Avebury
Honorary Treasurer: Tom Soper
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arrived Portugal 30.IX.95.

**PRESS RELEASE,** **25 September 1995**

## FIVE EAST TIMORESE SEEK ASYLUM AT BRITISH EMBASSY IN JAKARTA

Five East Timorese, all in their early twenties, entered the British embassy in Jakarta today (25/9/95) and asked for political asylum. All five have been on the run from the security forces in illegally occupied East Timor and fled to Jakarta from Dili in the recent past. Most are survivors of the Santa Cruz massacre in November 1991 when nearly three hundred young East Timorese were shot dead by Indonesian troops. Each one of them has beeen involved in peaceful demonstrations in East Timorbefore and since that massacre. Their 'crime' is that they oppose the illegal occupation of their country by Indonesia which is now entering its twentieth year. The British embassy told journalists in Jakarta today that their request for asylum has been sent to London for consideration.

Over the years, groups of East Timorese have entered foreign embassies in Jakarta on four separate occassions because their lives were in grave danger in East Timor. Earlier this year, eighteen brave Timorese made a hazardous journey in a tiny boat to Australia, fleeing from Indonesian brutality.

TAPOL has urged the British government to accede to their request for asylum. These are all men whose lives are in danger and should, under no circumstances, be surrendered to the Indonesian authorities. It has called on the government to grant them asylum and allow them to enter the UK as soon as possible.

Many British people are now acutely aware of the plight of the people of East Timor and would warmly welcome their presence in this country. We urge the British government to grant the five asylum-seekers the right to entre Britain as a matter of urgency.

In a petition presented to the embassy, the five demand implementation of all the decisions of the recent inter-Timorese talks in Austria in June this year, and the unconditional release of resistance leader Xanana Gusmao and his inclusion in talks to reach a settlement of the East Timor question.

The five are:

**T.J. Temitio**, 23, was raised in an orphanage as both his parents were killed by Indonesian troops. He later went to an Indonesian school where the security forces harassed him, wanting him expelled for being the son of Fretilin fighters. He joined the clandestine front and took part in several demonstrations. On 17 August this year he was arrested and severely torture. He escaped, stayed with the guerrillas in the bush for a week, then fled to Jakarta.

**Antonio Baptista Sequeira**, 24, both of whose parents were killed at the time of the Indonesian invasion. He took part in a number of demonstrations and was present at the Santa Cruz massacre in November 1991. He was detained in Viqueque and after being released was closely watched by the military. He took action against Ninja gangs who terrorised the population earlier this year and was thereafter pursue by the security forces. He fled to Kupang then to Jakarta in August this year.

**Nelson Turquel**, 25, took part in the demonstration on 12 November 1991 and earlier this year tried to counter the activities of the Ninja gangs. After avoiding arrest for this, he fled to Jakarta. His father was arrested earlier this month in Dili.

**Joaquim Alim**, 24, escaped the Santa Cruz massacre. Earlier this year, he was involved in actions against the Ninja gangs. He escaped arrest and was intending to join a group of 18 refugees who fled by boat to Australia this year but was unable to join them at the last moment. He fled from East Timor to Jakarta in August this year.

**Egas Soares**, 25, has taken part in demonstrations in Dili since the Pope's visit in October 1989 and was ordered to spy for the intelligence. Attempts were made to arrest him following a demonstration outside a Dili hotel so he decided to flee. He arrived in Jakarta 18 months ago.

## Grant asylum to East Timorese

*From Mr H. R. Bruhns*

Sir: It is to be hoped that Britain does grant asylum to the five East Timorese men who have sought refuge in the British Embassy in Jakarta ("Timorese plead for UK asylum", 26 September). The atrocities carried out by Indonesia in the two decades since it occupied East Timor remain largely unpublicised. The scale of death in that brutalised nation is now well documented by Amnesty International and numerous other reputable organisations, and torture continues to be levelled against East Timorese thought to resist the Indonesian occupation.

Western nations, with few exceptions, have maintained an inexcusable silence on the subject of East Timor; and the ringing defences of human rights and international law by the British Government during the Falklands invasion and the Gulf war remain so much self-interested cant while East Timor continues to be ignored. Indeed, Britain provided some of the arms used in East Timor. Such are our thanks to a nation whose aid to the Allies in the Second World War cost it some 40,000 lives. We have an opportunity here to redeem a little of our blemished human rights record by granting asylum to these East Timorese.

Yours,
H. R. BRUHNS
Milton Keynes
27 September

INDEPENDENT
Sat. 30 Sept
1995

**Jakarta** — Five East Timorese youths who claim to be members of an underground movement which opposes Indonesian rule in their homeland left Indonesia for asylum in Portugal after taking refuge for five days in the British embassy. They gave victory signs as they left the building in central Jakarta. *Reuter*

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26/9/95

Peter Carey
Trinity College
Oxford OX1 3BH

Dear Peter Carey,

We are writing to you , as a matter of urgency, as a friend of the East Timorese.

For your information I enclose a copy of the press release that TAPOL released on 25 September '95 following the request for political asylum by five East Timorese at the British embassy in Jakarta.

Tapol is lobbying the British government to grant the said asylum to the five East Timorese. It is Tapol's opinion that we can exert the greatest influence on this ongoing situation by carrying out a letter writing campaign to the UK press. On 26th Sept., all of the British quality papers mentioned the situation of the five East Timorese at the Jakarta British embassy. According to the Foreign Office in London, their embassy in Jakarta has been beseiged with journalists. They say also the the five are being looked after, fed, etc.. Finally the FCO say the whole matter will take several days to sort out.

I am now writing to you to ask if you would be so kind as to write a letter, short or otherwise, to a daily newspaper of your choice. I enclose the cutting from today's press for your information. We at TAPOL do feel that at this stage of events the press is the most appropriate place to discuss and debate the present situation.

Thank you very much for your consideration and your help.

Youurs sincerely,

Mary O'Connell.

PS Carmel asked I fax you (for oped) - see the Independent newspaper for more details.